

American Community Survey (ACS) Why We Ask: Industry and Occupation

We ask about a person's employer, the kind of business or industry of that employer, the work a person was doing, and that person's most important duties at that job to produce industry and occupation statistics. These statistics are used to understand more about the labor force, to plan and measure education, employment, career development and job training programs, and to measure compliance with antidiscrimination policies.

42 For whom did this person work?
If now on active duty in the Armed Forces, mark (X) this box → ☐
and print the branch of the Armed Forces.
Name of company, business, or other employer

43 What kind of business or industry was this?
Describe the activity at the location where employed. (For example: hospital, newspaper publishing, mail order house, auto engine manufacturing, bank)

44 Is this mainly – Mark (X) ONE box.
☐ manufacturing?
☐ wholesale trade?
☐ retail trade?
☐ other (agriculture, construction, service, government, etc.)?

45 What kind of work was this person doing?
(For example: registered nurse, personnel manager, supervisor of order department, secretary, accountant)

46 What were this person's most important activities or duties?
(For example: patient care, directing hiring policies, supervising order clerks, typing and filing, reconciling financial records)

The questions as they appear on the 2016 ACS paper questionnaire. This topic was introduced on the Decennial Census in 1850, and was transferred to the ACS when it replaced the Decennial Census long-form in 2005.

Examples of Federal Uses

- Required to enforce nondiscrimination provisions in employment by private employers, government agencies, and labor organizations. Used in federal affirmative employment programs, to identify under-representation in job categories and specific occupations.
- Used to help make other federal surveys more accurate, including those that produce the nation's official labor market estimates.
- Used in the formula that determines the allocation of funding to states and territories for the Mental Health Services Block Grant, and the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant.

Examples of Other Uses

State and local agencies use these statistics to identify the percentage of people employed full-time, and the percentage of residents who work in each community year-round. Used by companies to decide where to locate new plants, warehouses, stores, or offices.